

M/T
ROAD
TEST

UTILITY WITH A FLAIR

New Scout Sportop offers off-road family fun

IN THIS DAY of the special-purpose vehicle, one wonders why it took so long to revive what is essentially the theme first set by the late and lamented Jeepster in 1948. Now International has done it with the Scout Sportop, and we know that they are approximately six months ahead of similar competitive efforts.

The reason for the introduction of this civilized Scout lies in the sales record of the original short-wheelbase model which unlike the Jeep comes standard with doors, windows and a 2-man steel top. Over 140,000 have been sold since its introduction in 1961, and about 80% of these were to persons who planned to use them for pleasure rather than business.

Certainly just as much if not more pleasure may be derived from 4wd mounted underneath comfortable seating for four, wind-up windows and a choice of collapsible or removable top. About the only problem introduced with such a vehicle is that the owner might worry about his pretty sheetmetal while charging through cactus country.

Where some volume producers go to considerable initial expense to tool up for a simplified, idiot-lighted instrument panel, IHC takes the other and more satisfactory (to us) route of buying from a supplier a cheap but adequate gauge and switch for every function. They stretch impressively across the whole driver's half of the panel. There is even a switch for each windshield wiper, keeping them out of sequence and thus

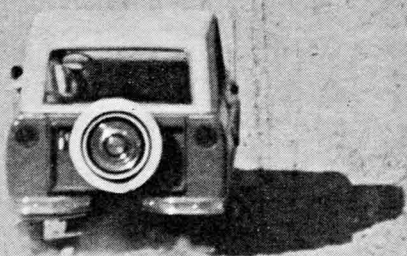
the driver awake. Both a hand throttle and a choke are provided.

The heater controls, though, require a little study. We kept getting heat when we didn't want it with all visible controls in the OFF position until we learned that you were supposed to shut off the water supply to the heater by turning a valve under the hood.

Another thing you soon learn is the reason why you seem to run out of gas so quickly. There are two small tanks in the rear fenders in lieu of one big one, and these have to be switched manually, as does the gauge.

The high tunnel has one virtue besides restricting the guest list. Both the transmission and transfer-case levers have a short gate and are still right at hand. The 4-speed box is a worthwhile option, and one wishes that IHC as well as the other utility vehicle makers would invest in the design of a synchromesh low. This may be just a convenience in a passenger car, but with an off-road vehicle, if you have to stop to shift into low, you might be stopped, period.

Temporarily, at least, another valid reason for choosing the 4-speed option is the relatively low (93) horsepower of the standard 4-cylinder engine. Just a year ago, nobody seemed to expect more, but then the Jeep people came along with their V-6 hot rod rated at 155 hp. In retaliation, Ford is known to be planning a V-8 for its Bronco, and since the IHC unit is simply half of a V-8 already in production, this company could easily put the two halves



2wd hardtop (foreground) ground to standstill, while 4wd sailed to top of 40% grade.



Fiberglass top and rear windows are removable, chromed bumpers are standard on Sportop. Two side-filling tanks are optional.



53.1-inch track stabilizes Scout while cornering. Steering is quick and precise, even on models equipped with 4-wheel drive.

PHOTOS BY HERB MCLAUGHLIN

back together again. To be sure, IHC has an optional supercharger that increases output by 20%, but it doesn't cut in until 2000 rpm. Most off-road usage is at an rpm lower than that figure.

However, if more power is not wanted, the little 4, slanted 40 degrees to the driver's right, makes servicing a delight. If it didn't get a little hot there, you could easily carry some luggage in the space left over under the hood. A convenient feature is an arrangement whereby the points may be set externally with the engine running.

The Sportop comes in two forms. The cheaper one has a removable hard top constructed of double-walled fiberglass. This sells for \$2389.59 without 4wd. A hand-folded rag top costs only \$33.58 more, and as it is equally weatherproof with its wind-up windows, it would seem to be the biggest bargain since the 15-cent Staten Island ferry ride. What do

you do with the bulky, heavy fiberglass top once you get it off? The rag top is a little bulky when folded, but at least you carry it around with you, making it handy in case it rains.

On the highway, both the 2- and 4wd Scout feel more at home than the Jeep. The springing is softer, and you don't get any of that almost harmonic, choppy reaction to the sections in a concrete road. Although you sit about 25 inches off the ground in both, perhaps it is the security of the Scout's metal doors that dispels the illusion of towering over other traffic. These doors, incidentally, are easily removable by punching out the hinge pins in case you want to hunt jack rabbits or lasso cattle.

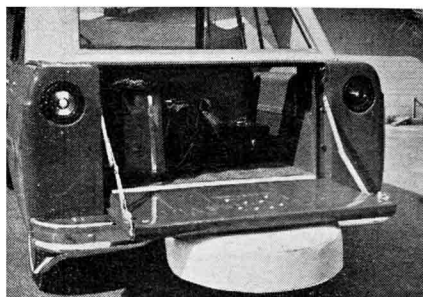
Another measure of security comes from the 53-inch track of the Scout, which is 4.5 inches wider than the Jeep even though the Scout is about five inches thinner overall. The Jeep penal-

izes itself with its step plates and side-mounted spare.

Off-road, the 4wd Scout is no match for the V-6 Jeep, and the 2wd Scout doesn't belong here at all. The picture on top of page 68 shows a 4wd Scout successfully puffing up a 40% grade with a rather soft surface. The 2wd Scout (bottom) quit at the position shown, with its rear wheels helplessly excavating the equipage into even deeper trouble.

At a time when teams of copywriters work long into the evening dreaming up such color descriptions as "nightwatch" blue, "montero" red and "candlelite" cream, it was refreshing to receive the official IHC handout on the Scout. This simply states that the car is available in "automotive" yellow, red, green, white, gold, beige and blue. If you don't like an off-white top, you can paint it some other color.

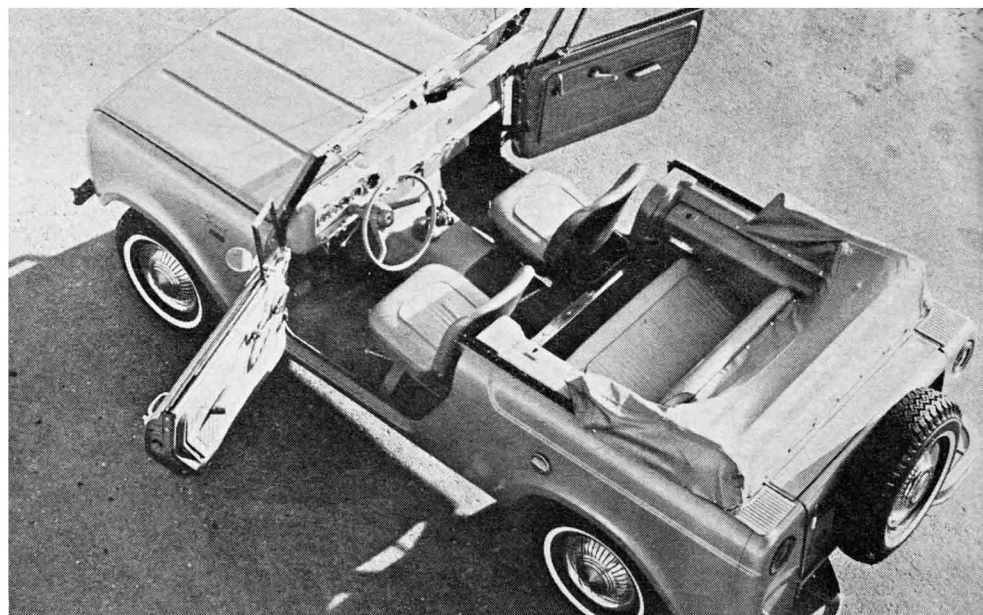
—Don MacDonald



Four bags occupy only a portion of available luggage area. One hand releases gate.



The complete, functional instrument panel carries a gauge or switch for everything.



Wheel wells narrow rear seat to two adults, but they have plenty of leg room. Front bucket seats are both adjustable. The top can be folded manually with no difficulty.

INTERNATIONAL SCOUT SPORTOP

2-door, 4-passenger, 4-wheel-drive utility vehicle

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

ENGINE IN TEST CAR: Ohv 4

Bore and stroke: 3⁷/₈ x 3 7/32 ins.
Displacement: 152 cu. ins.
Advertised horsepower: 93.4 @ 4400 rpm
Max. torque: 142.7 lbs.-ft. @ 2400 rpm
Compression ratio: 8.19:1
Carburetion: 1 1-bbl.

TRANSMISSION TYPE & FINAL DRIVE RATIO: 3-speed manual, floor-mounted lever. 4.27:1 rear-axle ratio (front also when transfer case is ordered)

SUSPENSION: Semi-elliptic springs front and rear, with direct-acting shocks at each wheel

STEERING: Cam and roller-mounted single-lever gear
Turning diameter: 40.2 ft., curb to curb
Turns lock to lock: 4.5

WHEELS: Steel disc, 16-in. dia. on 4-wheel drive; 15-in. on 2-wheel drive

TIRES: 6.00 x 16 rayon, or 7.35 x 15 4-ply rated

BRAKES: Hydraulic duo-servo
Diameter of drum: front, 10 ins.; rear, 9 ins.

SERVICE:

Type of fuel recommended: Regular
Fuel capacity: 11 gals.
Oil capacity: 4 qts.; with filter, 5 qts.
Shortest lubrication interval: 2000 mi.
Oil- and filter-change interval: 4000 mi.

BODY & FRAME: Box-section perimeter frame, all-steel body

Wheelbase: 100.0 ins.
Track: front, 53.1 ins.; rear, 53.1 ins.
Overall: length, 154.0 ins.; width, 68.6 ins.; height, 68.0 ins.
Min. ground clearance: 9.3 ins.
Usable trunk capacity: not applicable
Curb weight: 3000 lbs.

ACCESSORY PRICE LIST

Engine options: 111.3-hp, turbocharged	\$279.00
*4-speed close-ratio transmission	86.00
Overdrive (Borg-Warner)	240.00
Heavy-duty clutch	2.15
Limited-slip differential (either axle)	35.75
Progressive-rate springs	11.00
Heavy-duty front spring	2.80
Heavy-duty rear spring	6.00
*Warn hubs	64.00
Skid plates	45.00
*Tire carrier (external)	11.00
*Auxiliary gas tank (11 gals.)	25.00
*AM radio	58.00
*Heater and defroster	66.50
*Whitewall tires	63.00
*Bucket seats	std.

*On test car

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED PRICE: \$2650 (incl. taxes, safety equip't & PCV device)

PRICE OF CAR TESTED: \$3023.50 (incl. excise tax, delivery & get-ready charges, but not local tax & license)

MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY: 12,000 miles and/or 12 months